

Education: freire and bell hooks

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Addie Ward In the writings Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Education for the Critical Consciousness Freire suggests a mechanical flaw of education as the “ banking approach. ” This theory is described as the student being the bank and the teacher making the deposits, known as knowledge. The student’s turn into “ receptors” and “ collectors” of information, that has no connection to their lives. In this banking concept the teacher ‘ knows’ because he or she has already deposited the knowledge needed to know. This repetitive and degrading way of teaching (most of the time not intentionally), results in dehumanization of the teachers and the students. Freire believes that banking education hinders students to think freely and take another look at what is being taught. Most people don’t see the long-term affects that this causes, which is why Freire writes of many situations in the classroom where the “ banking approach” occurs. Freire puts the ‘ oppressors’ actions into perspective by elucidating how these approaches become virtually unnoticed due to their natural reoccurrence over time. Author bell hooks criticizes standard education not as essentially being lost but as the language being lost within the knowledge of education. The language is not literally lost but lost figuratively the way it is being taught and presented. bell hooks examines a situation in her class room, “ In a classroom setting, I encourage students to use their first language and translate it so they do not feel that seeking a higher education will necessarily estrange them from that language and culture they know most intimately”. (hooks p. 172) hooks wants languages to be presented as a skill, a talent that one has, which it is. Language is knowledge to listen and learn from and these valuable opportunities are being lost in standard education, as we know today. hooks

wants students to be able to speak in perspectives of their own lives, not be criticized of this language but to see it as a gift. Altering the way we view different languages will shift our attitude toward learning more about cultures and the way we neglect to accept diversity. hooks believes in education having no dominancy, no one group of people such as ' the oppressor' being in control. The students are viewed as the victims of the oppressors, students need to never forget where they came from and never be ashamed of their talents. All students should be in touch and aware of oneself. Teachers need to focus more on individualizing the students and recognizing their abilities. By doing this as a whole we will be able to discover ourselves and experience our differences. Freire wants similar changes, changes that will bring together the student and the oppressor, to be able to unite as one and help each other learn. Nor the student or the teacher has more to offer. Freire wants schools to change to " problem-posing education", which sets the education to focus on the student's long term goals and achievements. Enlightening students helps them realize they are just as important as anyone else. I believe every student has something to offer to a teacher whether it is exceeding ones expectations, or a personal experience that touched your heart; you will remember that person forever. Education determines how you think, how you make decisions and how well you work, through this we are able to unite. This is what Freire means when he states, " Problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity. Hence it is prophetic. Hence, it affirms men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead, for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more

clearly what and who they are so that they can move wisely build the future. " (Pedagogy of the Oppressed p. 7) In the writing " Teaching Towards Death", hooks is very concerned with the route colleges are taking to educate their students. Hooks makes a valid argument that teaching at the university levels are not as effective as they could be because university's are too goal oriented. She claims student's can not get the best overall education because they are so focused on their future; therefore, they can't look at the present. Hooks writes " In modern schooling the messages students receive is that everything they learn in the classroom is mere raw material for something that they will produce later on in life. This displacement of meaning into the future makes it impossible for students to fully immerse themselves in the art of learning and to experience that immersion as a complete, satisfying moment of fulfillment." (hooks p. 166) In this quote hooks is implying that the ' imperialist white-supremacist patriarchy" is the blame for the education system being the way it is. She goes on to say that a lot of students do not put much effort into what they are learning because they can't apply it to their future goals. Many people get caught up in this life, they do not know what their future has in store for them, so instead of trying to live for the future students should live in the present. One is not alive in the future; he is alive " now. " What hooks is getting at is simple. If people would stop focusing more on what awaits them in the future , they might gain more enjoyment from different parts of life, education for one. Freire and hooks both focus on one similar thing, reality. Neither author agrees that memorizing books in school can help your grade or how reading about cultures and diversities can help you understand them.

They want to see realistic experiments, such as relationships gained from learning, a student looking up to the educator as an idol, and white women learning from the black vernacular. We gain solidarity, and valuable skills that will help us through life through these actions. These two authors didn't agree on everything though. Freire focuses on the big picture, the education as a whole, the oppressors need to change, and the students to remain the same, as a 'receptor' or 'collector' of knowledge. hooks wants the students to become more realistic, such as when the slaves came to America, and adapted to the language by applying it their own vernacular. Students can learn to resist the oppressor's authority as well as learn from it. For instance, a student in a classroom listening to the educator but also being able to see past the knowledge they bestow and thinking outside of the box, they can decide if the knowledge they are receiving is valid. Neither Freire nor hooks views should compete to be the 'better' view in my opinion. hooks and Freire's views both have flaws but together they can make a perfect match as to how education should be revised and taught, the student teacher relationship is vital to a student's learning. hooks focuses on education and background of students but the students may not know how to stay in touch with their backgrounds, due to the oppressor's language. Freire focuses on the educator being the sole reason students are not receiving information sufficiently when it could be the student as well. Freire also fails to observe the imbalanced power structure between teacher and students inside the classroom. Meanwhile, if the two strategies are put together the students may be able to adapt and learn more from each. All students have entirely different backgrounds and different degrees of achievement they are willing

to accomplish but when the educator takes this into consideration they are able to “ discover” knowledge with and from each other. If you focus and an individual students background as well as their achievements and long-term goals you are able to pin point the student’s needs and help them succeed. Education is more than opening a book and reading, more than academic based problems and more than receiving and communicating information. When Freire talks of the banking concept of education, he means the idea of knowledge deposited into a student’s empty head. Education should be a confrontation with oneself and the world surrounding oneself. Education shouldn’t be the same with every person, we are all unique. Teachers should have a custom design for each student that addresses their abilities and weaknesses. Such custom evaluations of each student should focus on natural talents and ways the student is able to learn, such as applying for particular jobs. Educators should be involved in cognitive learning. It’s always easier to focus on the skills that come naturally to one and spend time learning and mastering the difficulties. With a custom design, the student’s background is being focused on; in turn, the teachers are able to relate to the students on a deeper level. When you begin such a personal relationship with each student it is easier to relate to them. For example, parent teacher conferences may help teachers become aware of the students at home activities. The parents are able to tell the teacher what topics the student is struggling with so the teacher can work with the student. This way of teaching is also focusing on the “ now” that hooks would want, not drilling the students to learn for the future. This could be the main reason homeschool students out perform the average private school student.

A study done in 2006 by the HSLDA Advocates for Homeschooling states, " Research has shown that homeschoolers on average do better than the national average on standardized achievement tests for the elementary and secondary grade levels. Statistics demonstrate that homeschoolers tend to score above the national average on both their SAT and ACT scores. " While we all know that it is not possible to assign a teacher to each and every student in a public school, it is possible to lower the student count in each classroom for teachers to be able to spend more time with each student. I strongly believe this method will form a lifelong love for learning with the student. A custom design of education for each student is a perfect combination of Freire and bell hooks beliefs. We are all students in the world, there is always more to learn and understand about society for the future and for now. In modern day society there should never be an ' oppressor'. Students are the future society; therefor education serves society as a whole. Bibliography [http://www. hslda. org/](http://www.hslda.org/)